

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/PHL:BAFLECK:PAW/CMD
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S/S:PSEBASTIAN

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TO AMEMBASSY MANILA
INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 070322

EXDIS, MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE MILITARY BASE NEGOTIATIONS
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. AMBASSADOR ROMUALDEZ, ACCOMPANIED BY DCM BELISARIO, CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE HOLBROOKE MARCH 28 TO DISCUSS STATUS OF BASE NEGOTIATIONS. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY AND COUNTRY DIRECTOR FLECK ALSO ATTENDED. ROMUALDEZ INDICATED GOP NOW PREPARED TO RESUME TALKS LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE. HOLBROOKE REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH OUR REVIEW NOT YET COMPLETE, THAT TIMING WOULD NOT APPEAR TO CREATE ANY PROBLEM. HE ASKED WHETHER HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSION WOULD BE USEFUL PRIOR TO RESUMPTION, IN ORDER TO SET UP MODALITIES AND CREATE CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE FOR TALKS.

2. ROMUALDEZ STATED GOP WOULD WELCOME HIGH-LEVEL DIS-
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CUSSIONS TO PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS, PARTICULARLY TO CLARIFY US COMMITMENTS UNDER MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY, IN WHICH MARCOS PERSONALLY EXTREMELY INTERESTED. WHEN HOLBROOKE ASKED IF ROMUALDEZ WERE REFERRING TO SPRATLY ISLANDS, LATTER REPLIED THAT STATUS OF DISPUTED TERRITORIES WAS NOT THE ISSUE. ISSUE WAS DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF US COMMITMENT, PARTICULARLY UNDER ARTICLES 4 AND

5 OF MDT, AS STATED BY PREVIOUS US PRESIDENTS AND BY

EXECUTIVE BRANCH WITNESSES BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES, NOTABLY IN SYMINGTON HEARINGS. ROMUALDEZ SAID NATURE OF US CLARIFICATION OF ITS TREATY COMMITMENTS WOULD INFLUENCE GOP POSITIONS ON OTHER ISSUES IN BASE NEGOTIATIONS. HE CITED STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON AS EXAMPLE OF WHAT GOP WOULD LIKE TO SEE.

3. HOLBROOKE REPLIED THAT QUESTION OF REINTERPRETING TREATY WAS VERY DELICATE, IN VIEW OF CHANGED SITUATION IN ASIA SINCE TREATY ENTERED INTO FORCE AND CHANGED ATTITUDES IN CONGRESS AND AMONG AMERICAN PUBLIC. HE POINTED OUT THAT GOP HAS NOW ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH PRC AND WOULD SOON HAVE SOVIET EMBASSY IN MANILA. SINO-SOVIET BLOC AND THREAT TO PHILIPPINES WHICH EXISTED WHEN TREATY DRAWN UP HAVE BEEN SUPPLANTED BY NEW SITUATION. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT GOP MIGHT EXPECT FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TYPE OF STATEMENT WHICH HE COULD NOT MAKE BECAUSE OF CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE AREA AND NEW POLITICAL REALITIES IN THIS COUNTRY (E.G., WAR POWERS ACT). INSISTENCE ON SUCH A FORMAL, PRECISE STATEMENT MIGHT RESULT IN PRESIDENT MAKING A STATEMENT WEAKER THAN THE ACTUAL US COMMITMENT TO THE PHILIPPINES, WHICH REMAINS VERY STRONG. HE ASKED ROMUALDEZ TO CONVEY TO MARCOS THAT THE PRESIDENT CARES DEEPLY ABOUT THE US COMMITMENT TO THE PHILIPPINES BUT HE MIGHT WELL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE A STATEMENT SUCH AS THOSE MADE IN THE PAST. HOLBROOKE STATED THAT CONTRARY TO APPREHENSIONS VOICED BY NUMEROUS

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ASEAN OFFICIALS, US IS NOT PULLING OUT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE THIS VERY CLEAR IN HIS RECENT PUBLIC UTTERANCES AND PRIVATELY TO FUKUDA AND OTHERS. WE EXPECT THAT MARCOS WILL SHORTLY RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM HIM EMPHASIZING THIS POINT, AS WELL AS CONTINUING US COMMITMENT TO THE PHILIPPINES.

4. HOLBROOKE STATED THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED THAT NEITHER SIDE HAD RECENTLY MADE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID USG BELIEVES IT IMPORTANT TO NEGOTIATE NEW BASE AGREEMENT SATISFACTORY TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS, BUT NOT UNDER ARTIFICIAL TIME PRESSURES.

5. HOLBROOKE INFORMED ROMUALDEZ THAT HOLBROOKE PLANNING TO ACCOMPANY CODEL WOLFF TO MANILA BUT HOPES MEET WITH GOP OFFICIALS SEPARATELY FROM CODEL. HE DESCRIBED VISIT AS ORIENTATION AND SAID HE WAS NOT REPEAT NOT PLANNING TO NEGOTIATE REGARDING BASE ISSUES. ROMUALDEZ REPLIED THAT HE WAS SURE MARCOS WOULD BE VERY GLAD TO SEE

HOLBROOKE.
CHRISTOPHER

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